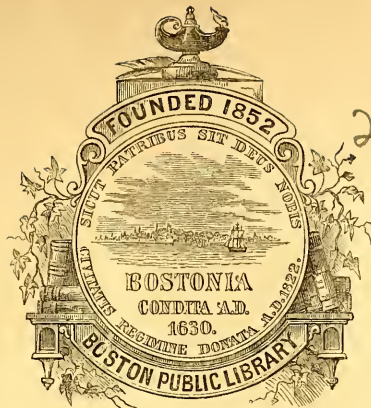


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PAMPHLETS.

*Massachusetts Teachers' Association
Report upon Pronouncing orthography
the results of its use
St. Louis, first session
March 1880*

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PRONOUNCING ORTHOGRAPHY.

C RESULTS OF ITS USE.—ST. LOUIS.

THIS print has now been tested and used for so long a time, in so many places, under such a variety of circumstances, so faithfully and thoroughly, and with such uniform and decisive results, that its value and practicability are no longer questions to be settled, but facts ascertained by experience. It is time that these facts should be laid before the people, that all who are learning to read our books and newspapers, or ought to learn to read, may have the benefit of this guide through the wilderness of English orthography. The most extensive and complete trial of it has been in St. Louis.

WM. T. HARRIS, Superintendent of Schools, in the following letter, dated June 23, 1869, gives the results after three years' trial:

"In reply to your inquiry regarding your Pronouncing Orthography in our Schools, I have very encouraging accounts to give. You must have received my Report published last March, and noticed what I said on page 97 about it.

"I. Children who entered School last September, and commenced the Primer at that time, completed the Primer, and Primary Reader, and Second Reader, and some classes entered the Third Reader (McGuffey's Series).

"II. These pupils were as far advanced in Spelling as in Reading. They spelled both by sound and by letter.

"III. Our best and most thorough teachers carry their pupils along with the two kinds of spelling from the start, and hence save the whole time hitherto required for transition into common print. They read common print as well as the Pronouncing Orthography, after they have become familiar with the words in the new dress.

"IV. Their pronunciation is a great success.

"V. The teachers are all, without exception, enthusiastic in favor of the new method, though some of weak throats complain of the exertion required.

"VI. At a competitive examination, at the close of the schools, in which pupils from the higher grades, mainly, participated, one little girl who did not know a letter at the beginning of the year, came out on the roll of honor with the seven best, for her very superior reading of Byron's 'Adieu to his Native Land.'

"We cannot keep pupils in the Pronouncing Print above half a year. It is a mere transitional stage, and gets to be more and more powerful in its effects, as it grows into our system, and is understood by our teachers."

The history of the first introduction and trial of this print in St. Louis is very instructive. In justice to the teachers, and the officers and members of the School Board in that city, and for the benefit of those in other places, a full account of it will hereafter be given. At present there is space only for a brief outline of the progress of the trial, showing that it became "more and more powerful in its effects as it grew into the school system," and the teachers understood it and became skilled in its use.

PROGRESS OF THE TRIAL.—FIRST YEAR.

It was put on trial in September, 1866, as soon as the first books printed in it were ready.

MISS A. C. BRACKETT, Principal of the St. Louis Normal School, gave the first information of the result in the following letter:

"One of my last year's graduates, Miss Helen Smith, undertook the instruction of two classes, using your Primer with one of them, and teaching the other by the old method.

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The two classes have kept along nearly together, and the difference in their reading is very marked in clearness and distinctness of enunciation and articulation; so much so, that I think no one could fail to notice it. The result is so satisfactory that Mr. Harris," (then master of that school—the Clay school) "now our Assistant Superintendent, is strongly in favor of introducing the books into all the Primary Schools in September, in which I most heartily concur." (In reply to a question she says:) "I cannot conceive of there being any difficulty in the transition from your method to the common one."

MR. DIVOL, then Superintendent, reported to the School Board, before the close of the year, as follows:

"The experiment, begun last fall, of introducing Leigh's modification of the alphabet, has resulted satisfactorily. A class in the Pronouncing Primer was commenced at the same time with one in the ordinary one. Each class received the most careful attention from its teacher. The transition from the phonetic modification to the ordinary type was soon effected, and the relative merits of the two systems may be witnessed by all who visit the Clay School.

"The class that used Leigh's Primer have a surprising degree of accuracy in distinguishing slight shades of different pronunciation, and can readily analyze any word into its elementary sounds, and spell it with its correct letters, if it is a word they have seen in the lesson.

"All those provincialisms, improper pronunciations, and indistinct articulations, which are so prevalent in this section, especially among children whose parents are of foreign birth—all those vices of speech which cost the most persistent and long-continued drill to eradicate in after years—seem to be filtered out."

THE ST. LOUIS BOARD OF EDUCATION, at a meeting held August 9, 1867, adopted the following:

Whereas, The experiment of introducing Leigh's phonetic modification of the alphabet has resulted satisfactorily in the departments where it was tried during the last scholastic year, and

Whereas, It promises a great saving of time, and a great increase of efficiency in teaching to read; therefore,

Resolved, That its adoption in the Primary Grade of the Public Schools of St. Louis be made general as early as practicable the coming year.

MR. HARRIS, Assistant Superintendent, after the close of the year, thus stated the final result of the year's trial (see Annual Report for 1866-'67, p. 57):

"The introduction of this system at the Clay School (the use of a Primer printed in modified type) proved to be productive of the most satisfactory results. The class that finished it made very rapid progress in learning to spell in the common orthography after they were transferred to the ordinary type in the First Reader. But the best of all was the demonstration that the imperfections of articulation and the provincialisms of pronunciation current here can be completely eradicated by that thorough drill upon elementary sounds which is rendered necessary in teaching the Phonetic Primer. Besides, it was shown that this can all be done in less than the time required for completing the same text-book in the ordinary type! Our population is so composite that almost all provincialisms are found here, while the foreign idioms and defects of pronunciation common among immigrants from Europe, spread rapidly through all classes. It is, therefore, anticipated that the action of the Board, by which the phonetic system has been adopted for the ensuing year in the seventh grade throughout the city, will prove of great utility."

Such was the result of the first year's trial.

1. The two classes kept along nearly together in the Primer, while learning the letters, sounds, and words, and taking the first steps.

2. The class in the Pronouncing Print made the transition to reading in common print in a short time, and without difficulty.

3. They made rapid progress in learning to spell in the common orthography, after they were transferred to the ordinary type.

4. Their reading showed "a marked superiority in clearness and distinctness of enunciation and articulation."

5. Provincialisms and bad pronunciation were corrected.

6. They had a surprising degree of accuracy in distinguishing slight shades of different pronunciation, and in analyzing words or spelling by sound.

7. All this was done in less than the time required for completing the same text-book in the ordinary type!

8. In view of these facts the School Board ordered the introduction of this print into all the primary schools; but they did not yet see the need of changing the programme and providing for greater progress and an increased amount of reading during the first year.

PROGRESS OF THE TRIAL.—SECOND YEAR.

MR. HARRIS, Assistant Superintendent, gave the first account of this year's advance in the subjoined letter, dated February 13, 1868:

"The phonetic plan has proved a far greater success than was at first anticipated. Not only has it proved effective in eradicating defects in enunciation, but it has also proved a great saving of time, so that classes have been able to gain a whole quarter, in the course of this year, upon classes taught by the other method."

The same facts are thus stated in the Annual Report, 1867-'68, p. 97:

"The introduction of Leigh's Phonetic System into all the primary departments was followed by better results than could have been anticipated. The primary teachers exhibited a commendable degree of energy and persistency in mastering the best method of teaching it, and the sequel showed that pupils taught by the new system were far in advance of those taught the same length of time by the old plan."

Thus it appears that—

1. The success was far greater than was anticipated.
2. In addition to "eradicating defects of enunciation, there had been a great saving of time, to the extent of a whole quarter in the course of the first half year."
3. In consequence of this, the programme of studies, for the first year, was extended so as to include the previous work of a year and a half, thus:

Tabular View of Studies; (Annual Report, 1866-'67) p. xxvi., Appendix.

Studies and Text-books.	7th Grade—Quarters.				6th Grade—Quarters.				5th Grade—Quarters.			
	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I.	II.	III.	IV.
Primer.....	Cards.	30	72	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
First Reader.....	....	....	....	41	81	120	....	....	....	....	....	....
Second Reader.....	....	....	....	....	....	....	50	108	162	216	....	....

Same as amended (*Annual Report, 1867-'68, p. lxxvii., Appendix*):

Phonetic Primer.....	30	64	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Phonetic First Reader..	....	17	91	144	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Second Reader.....	....	....	....	....	50	90	162	....	....	....	....	....

The figures denote the pages to which the scholars are expected to advance during the Quarter indicated at the head of the vertical column.

PROGRESS OF THE TRIAL.—THIRD YEAR.

MR. HARRIS, in a letter to Messrs. Wilson, Hinkle & Co., Cincinnati, dated "Office Sup't Public Schools, St. Louis, October 20, 1868," said:

"Gentlemen: From your communication of the 12th inst., I am glad to learn you

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contemplate urging the general adoption of Leigh's modification of the alphabet. Our experience of over two years with it has demonstrated its practical efficiency.

"We find that all teachers—whether prepared for it or not, whether in favor of it or prejudiced against it—soon become pleased with it, and in all cases accomplish *far more* with it than with the *old system*. McGuffey's Primer is giving perfect satisfaction, and we are looking anxiously for the Phonetic Primary Reader."

This letter, published in their printed circular, brought the first news of the progress of the third year.

In March, 1869, I myself saw, for the first time, the gratifying results attained in the St. Louis schools, and found that the teachers had indeed done nobly, and had *reason* to be pleased with the good fruits of their work. Moreover, each had used this print in her own way, some taking one course in teaching, and some another—different methods being employed in different schools, with similar improved results in all.

Another letter from Mr. Harris, already given on page 5, gives a full report of progress up to the end of the year, and shows a very great advance beyond the gain of 1867-'68.

1. The classes completed all the reading assigned for the year, and then went on and completed the Second Reader in common print; thus doing all the work assigned for a year and a half, and nearly as much as had formerly been done with the common print in two years and a half.

2. This was not done by different teachers, of superior ability to those who had formerly taught in common print, or with more favorable classes. All this immensely greater amount and superior quality of school work was accomplished in most of the schools by the same teachers who had before used the common print, with similar classes, under similar circumstances, with the single exception of the use of the Pronouncing Print and the Natural Methods of teaching which it makes practicable, and to which it inevitably leads.

3. The children learned to spell both by sound and by letter from the start, and were as far advanced in spelling as in reading.

4. They read common print as well as the Pronouncing Print, after they became acquainted with the words by the aid of the new type.

5. There was no transition to make.

6. The teachers have all, without exception, become enthusiastic in favor of this new Print and method of teaching.

Such are some of the fruits of the first two or three years' use of the Pronouncing Orthography in St. Louis.

MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

Attention is invited to the following report, published in "The Massachusetts Teacher" for December, 1868, pp. 458—460. The standing of the gentlemen of this Committee and their ability as practical educators, the character of the Association that appointed them, the long time that they had this subject under consideration, and the opportunities they had for thorough investigation of the practical working of this system in the school-room, must give weight to their words. They speak of what they know.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

At the annual meeting of the Massachusetts State Teachers' Association, held in Boston October 12, 1865, "the chair read a letter from Dr. Bowditch, enclosing one from Dr. Leigh on a Pronouncing Print. The letter was referred to a Committee consisting of

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